

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 EB-08 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00
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FM AMEMBASSY NASSAU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9247
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L NASSAU 0484

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EAIR, TK
SUBJ: VISIT OF TURKS AND CAICOS CHIEF MINISTER MCCARTNEY

REF: STATE 071749

1. IN RESPONSE TO PARAGRAPH 5 OF REFTEL, THE ECONOMIC SITUATION IN TCI IS ALWAYS GRIM AND WITH SUSPENSION OF AIR SERVICE HAS FURTHER DETERIORATED. IN A PHONECON YESTERDAY, NAVFAC CO LCDR ATKINS INFORMED NLO THAT ALL HOTELS ON GRAND TURK ARE CLOSED, EXCEPT SALT RAKER INN WHICH IS A FAMILY OPERATION AND IS THE OWNER'S HOME AS WELL. THE ISLANDS NEWEST HOTEL, THE EVANS INN, REPORTEDLY WENT INTO RECEIVERSHIP LAST WEEK AND WAS SOLD TO AN UNKNOWN BUYER. THERE HAS BEEN NO RAIN SINCE BEFORE CHRISTMAS, VEGETATION INCLUDING SUBSISTANCE CROPS HAS DRIED UP AND AS DEPT AWARE THERE IS A SERIOUS WATER SUPPLY PROBLEM.

2. IN THE EMBASSY'S VIEW, SOME TYPE OF REGULAR AIR SERVICE TO FLORIDA AND US TOURIST MARKET IS VITAL TO THE SURVIVAL AND DEVELOPMENT OF TCI'S SMALL AND FRAGILE BUT NEVERTHELESS ESSENTIAL TOURIST INDUSTRY. AS FOR MACKEY AIRLINES, THE EMBASSY'S EVALUATION OF THEIR PERFORMANCE OF SERVICE IS THAT IT HAS BEEN MARGINAL. CONSTANT REFERENCES TO POOR SERVICE
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CAN BE HEARD, AND, INDEED, IN A FEBRUARY, 1977 EDITION OF TROPIC MAGAZINE IN THE SUNDAY MIAMI HERALD, MACKEY SERVICE WAS THE BUTT OF THE JOKE IN AN ARTICLE ON TCI. HOWEVER, THE EMBASSY SHARES THE VIEW OF LCDR. ATKINS AND TCI CHAMBER OF COMMERCE THAT MACKEY IS "BETTER THAN NOTHING." WE UNDERSTAND (NOT CONFIRMED) THAT MACKEY HAS 19 AIRCRAFT, BUT THAT ONLY ABOUT THREE COULD REALLY BE CONSIDERED

TOTALLY OPERATIONAL. LCDR ATKINS ALSO OBSERVED THAT
MACKEY'S PERFORMANCE OF ITS USAF RANGELINER CONTRACT SERVICE
HAD IMPROVED CONSIDERABLY SINCE SERVICE TO TCI WAS DROPPED.
IN THIS REGARD, USAF COULD PROBABLY OFFER OBSERVATIONS ON
MACKEY.

3. TO CARRY OUT ACTION OF PARA 7 OF REFTTEL, NLO CONTACTED
THE UK HICOM NASSAU RESIDENT EXPERT ON TCI, TRADE
COMMISSIONER MR. PETER NEWMAN. MR. NEWMAN STATED HE
WOULD TAKE ACTION TO ACCOMPLISH OUR SUGGESTIONS CONCERNING
CHIEF MINISTER MCCARTNEY'S TRAVELS. HE WILL PROBABLY PASS
THIS TO MR. D. MILNE, DEPHICOMER, WHO IS ASSUMING NEWMAN'S
DUTIES.

4. DURING THE CONVERSATION MR. NEWMAN ADVISED THAT THE
SITUATION WOULD BECOME MORE CRITICAL, SINCE THE INTERIM
ARRANGEMENTS WITH BAHAMASAIR FOR THREE-TIMES A WEEK
CHARTER SERVICE FROM NASSAU TO GRAND TURK WERE TERMINATED
AS OF YESTERDAY'S FLIGHT. BESIDES THE EXPENSE OF THIS
VENTURE, BAHAMASAIR EQUIPMENT STATUS CANNOT CONTINUE TO
SUPPORT THE VENTURE. THEREFORE, THE REMAINING AIR SERVICE
TO TCI IS A WEDNESDAY BAHAMASAIR FLIGHT FROM NASSAU TO
SOUTH CAICOS TO PORT AU PRINCE (WHEN IT FLYS) AND AIR
TURKS AND CAICOS DAILY FROM GRAND TURK TO CAPE HAITIAN
(WHEN IT FLYS).

5. NEWMAN OFFERED THE OPINION THAT, GIVEN THE CURRENT
CIRCUMSTANCES AND THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE DEATH OF AIR
SERVICE AND THE TOURIST INDUSTRY MIGHT CAUSE A NO CONFIDENCE
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VOTE FOR GTCI, MCCARTNEY MIGHT LISTEN SHOULD MACKEY
IMMEDIATELY COME IN WITH ANOTHER OFFER. IN ANY EVENT
MCCARTNEY AND HIS COLLEAGUES - BY CUTTING OUT MACKEY WITHOUT
SECURING ALTERNATIVE FLIGHTS - HAVE SERIOUSLY JEOPARDIZED
ISLAND'S ALREADY PRECARIOUS ECONOMY. EVERY DAY THAT PASSES
WITHOUT A RESUMPTION OF AIR SERVICE - MACKEY OR OTHERWISE -
WILL COMPOUND VERY SERIOUS ECONOMIC PROBLEMS FACING
ISLANDS.
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Message Attributes

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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 05-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Drafter: n/a
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